



STAFF REPORT – PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: David Loya, Community Development Director

PREPARER: David Loya, Community Development Director

DATE: February 25, 2025

TITLE: **Provide Direction on the Community Benefits Program**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Commission provide input and recommendations on the community benefits program required as part of the infill streamlining program adopted in General Plan 2045.

INTRODUCTION:

The Planning Commission worked on the community benefits program associated with the Gateway Area Plan in late 2022 and through 2023. The Council ultimately moved the community benefit program out of the Gateway Area Plan and into the General Plan so it could be applied in other areas where zoning specifically authorized the program. The Council decided to adopt the program by resolution instead of imbedding it in zoning ordinance so it could more readily respond to community need. The Commission will review the history of the community benefits program and make a recommendation to Council on how to structure the program.

DISCUSSION:

The Commission is tasked with recommending a program to Council based on previous community conversations. The Commission specifically addressed this program on the following dates: 8/4/22, 11/15/22, 4/22/23, 6/27/23, 10/14/2023, and 12/12/23. Commissioners and the public may wish to review those meetings at <https://arcataca.iqm2.com/Citizens/default.aspx>. The product of these conversations (Attachment A) was incomplete. The Commission will review the program components and make a recommendation based on current considerations and review.

The community benefits program is intended to continue to provide amenities typically provided through discretionary review conditions of approval. They were intended to have nexus and proportionality consistent with case law, while also applying to ministerial approvals, which do not generally allow for “conditions”.

Community benefits are required in the Gateway Area Plan (Chapter 2). But they will be implemented through the combination of the Gateway Code, the Gateway Plan, and a resolution identifying the specific community benefits.

The Commission's current work will be to continue the community benefits conversation and make a recommendation to Council.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

This proposal retains the policy intent to achieve off-site investment in the community to offset the impacts of higher-density projects that do not require discretionary review. The Commission may want to consider the economic impact on projects by requiring community benefits.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):

This action will be covered under the General Plan EIR.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Community Benefits Table Draft